

5-17-99

USDA

David Ahlers
6520 17th Ave. NE
Seattle, WA 98115

President Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, DC 20500



Dear President Clinton,

I do not wish to eat genetically engineered foods. I have a variety of chronic health problems, including Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, and wish to avoid any potential contributing factors, including unusual foods. Unfortunately, there is no way for me to tell the difference between genetically engineered foods and normal foods. I am sending you this letter to request that legislation be passed into law that will require genetically engineered foods to be labeled as such, regardless of whether the food is in its whole form or as an ingredient in processed foods.

Genetically engineered crops are not the same as those produced by typical hybridization. The Food & Drug Administration (FDA), the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are being negligent in protecting the rights of the American public in regards to genetically engineered foods. I am asking you to act legislatively to stop these agencies' neglect of public interest.

The FDA is allowing genetically engineered foods to come to market unlabeled although public opinion polls show a majority of Americans want them labeled. (81% in a January 11, 1999 *Time* magazine poll.) Last year the USDA even proposed to include genetically engineered foods in the definition of organic! The EPA is allowing the Bt bacteria (a valuable tool for organic agriculture) to be genetically engineered into the structure of plants. This could seriously undermine organic agriculture and cause significant human health and environmental problems.

Varieties of potatoes and corn are currently being sold that have been genetically engineered to contain the Bt toxin (*Bacillus thuringiensis*). The Bt toxin stays in the cell structure of the plants and is deadly enough to kill insects. We are being told these foods are safe for human consumption, but we have heard that before about DDT, EDB, and many other pesticides later shown to be cancer causing. I do not want to eat genetically engineered foods that contain the Bt toxin. Nor do I want to eat "Roundup Ready" soybeans or other future products such as tomatoes that contain the gene from a fish! But without labeling I cannot avoid it. So I am asking you to pass legislation to label all genetically engineered foods. Similar labeling legislation has already been passed in Europe and Australia.

Please write back to me and let me know if you intend to work to pass this legislation. Thank you!

Sincerely,

David Ahlers

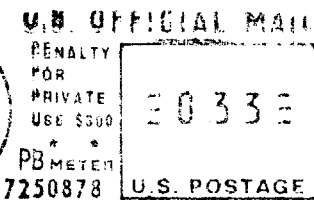
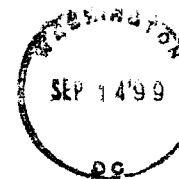
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United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

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Mr. Dennis Myers
Executive Secretariat
Food and Drug Administration
Room 1682
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

